

IV. REMARKS

In paragraph 7 of the Office Action the Examiner has rejected claims 1-5 as defining a process which is obvious from Masuda et al. Patent 5,978,639 in view of Badesha et al. Patent 5,366,772 and Cooper et al. Patent 4,365,042.

The Examiner acknowledges that Masuda et al. fail to teach critical step (b) of the present process in which a thin primer layer of a polyfunctional silicone composition is applied to the thin layer of elastomeric composition and is hydrolyzed to form a chemical bond therebetween.

However, the Examiner states that Badesha et al. teaches that aminosilane coupling agents can be used to form a chemical bond between an alkoxy-functional organosilane rubber composition and a fluoropolymer to form mechanical and structural integrity.

Masuda et al. Discloses a metal drum transfer member 200 having a rubber layer 201 laminated thereto and a resinous surface layer 202 thereon. There is no disclosure of a hydrolyzable silicone layer or of any intermediate layer which chemically bonds to the base layer or to the surface layer to prevent separation and delamination of the layers during prolonged use at elevated temperatures.

Badesha et al. discloses a fuser member having an outer elastomeric layer 2 comprised of a hybrid polymer network containing an elastomer, a coupling agent, a functional organosiloxane and a crosslinking agent. The interactivity referred to by the Examiner in the Office Action relates to the

co-reactants present within the single outer layer 2 forming the hybrid polymeric network.

This has no pertinence to the novel transfer belts of the present invention which comprise a fibrous fabric core supporting three layers which are chemically-bonded to each other to assure that the outer layer does not separate and delaminate over prolonged use and re-use at elevated fusion temperatures - see page 4 of the present specification, lines 1 to 4 and 13-19. There is no suggestion or disclosure of chemical bonding between different layers in Masuda et al. or Badesha et al. and therefore no combination of these references can be said to obviate the present invention.

Cooper et al. Patent 4,365,042 discloses resinous compositions comprising polyorganosiloxanes which may contain alkoxy groups. Applicant admits that such polymers are well known. However, Cooper et al. does not suggest or disclose the present invention or the concept of using such polymers as intermediate primer layers to form a chemical bond between a base layer impregnated into a fibrous fabric core layer and an outer surface layer of an image transfer member to prevent separation of the layers and delamination during use at elevated temperatures.

There is no disclosure in any of the cited references which would lead one skilled in the art to combine the references in the manner urged by the Examiner to produce applicants' results, except as a result of hindsight in the light of the present disclosure.

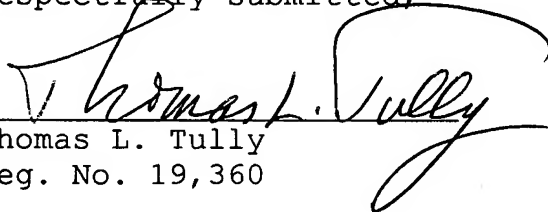
Reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested.

For all of the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully submitted that all of the claims now present in the application are clearly

novel and patentable over the prior art of record, and are in proper form for allowance. Accordingly, favorable reconsideration and allowance is respectfully requested. Should any unresolved issues remain, the Examiner is invited to call Applicants' attorney at the telephone number indicated below.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge payment for any fees associated with this communication or credit any over payment to Deposit Account No. 24-0037.

Respectfully submitted,


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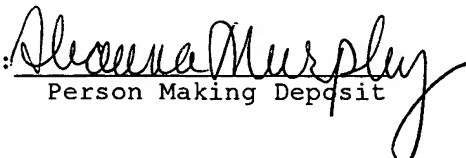
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